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its glory has departed. Before the year 1795 it contained fourteen parishes, one collegiate church, two abbeys, and seventeen convents; now the number of parishes is reduced to five, and the population is estimated at eight thousand.

In the Church of the Crusaders is the tomb of Peter the Hermit, but the Church of Notre Dame is the principal ecclesiastical edifice. The castle, built upon a rock, commands the city and the river Meuse, which divides the town into two parts and is spanned by a stone bridge of seven arches. This castle is of very ancient origin, but a great part of the first building was destroyed by Henry II. of France.

### SIGNS AND OMENS.

Along with our Saxon ancestors there came into England some of the strangest notions and oddest fancies that we can well conceive. Albion had, without doubt, plenty of wild, unearthly stories when her sons ranged the forest, before those forests echoed to the tramp of the Roman legions. And no doubt from the City of the Seven Hills there came new superstitions, more wild and terrible than the wood-coloured savages had ever heard of before. Druidical serpent-eggs, and the rest of the mistletoe mysteries, were followed by the nymphs of the fountains, at the very sight of whom sane men were driven mad. But with the Saxons came an entirely new class of superstitions, some of them full of horror, some light and cheerful, some terrible as was ever giant-goblin story to a child's fancy; others beautiful and gay as the fairies that slept in the bell-flowers and floated on the zephyr. The chief part of the fancies, however, being those we are about to mention here, were connected with the most ordinary affairs of life, and invested every little circumstance with a peculiar and awful meaning. They beset the daily life of every man, woman and child in the country; and many of them are still preserved amongst us. Of course these things are now slighted, and, except he be a very unlettered peasant indeed, a man does not turn back in dismay at the sight of three magpies; but once these things were received as positively true, and were regarded with as much certainty as we might count on a tide or a change of the moon.

Imagine a man believing that all these little circumstances—the falling of a stone, the ticking of a death-watch, a tingling in the ear, a shivering sensation in the back, or any other similar trivial occurrence—really betokened some good or evil fortune, what a strange sort of a life he must lead!

A stork settles on a gable of his house. Welcome. To kill the bird would be open sacrilege, for the stork is a harbinger of happiness. He receives the visit with a feeling of delight, and hails it as a promise of good luck. When he goes out, a strange dog follows him: here again is another sign of prosperous fortune. A strange dog never follows any person without good luck speedily coming on the favoured one. Welcome to the dog. When night sets in, the man looks up on the shining points in the heavens, the jewels of the night, and notices a shooting star. Good luck again. He forms a wish before the star has disappeared, and the wish is certain to be gratified. Moreover, our friend is lucky altogether: he was born with a caul, and this is certain to render him remarkably fortunate, besides having the extraordinary effect of preserving anybody who buys it from a watery grave. People now-a-days are short of faith, and prefer life-preservers of another sort—such, for instance, as cork jackets. But our lucky friend, besides being born with a caul, having a stork on his house, a strange dog at his heels, and wishing himself good fortune as a shooting star flits over the face of the heavens, has found, unawares, some four-leaved clover, and on this account, as well as all the rest, is entitled to the best of luck all his life along. Fortunately, too, he has been seated, inadvertently, between a married couple at a dinner table, and this ensures a

“Home, and in the cup of life  
That honey drop, a pleasing wife”

and at no distant date—within the twelvemonth, as sure as the zodiac.

But our friend suffers from rheumatism. What is he to do?

Go to the doctor?—nothing of the sort. Let him steal a potato, or, if he objects to steal one, let him beg, but on no account buy, one. If he prefers a chesnut to a potato, a chesnut will answer just as well. As long as he retains either in his possession, he is a safe man. Still accidents may happen, and sitting next his dearest friend, our lucky man lets fall some grains of salt upon the table. Spilling salt betokens a strife between the person who spills it and the person next to whom he sits. What is our friend to do in order to avert the omen? He must lift up carefully, very carefully, not leaving a single grain, the salt that is spilt, with his knife, and throw it over his shoulder. Nothing else will avert disaster. But what if he upsets the salt-cellar altogether? This signifies a shipwreck, and our friend may look out for squalls; there is fine weather now, but a storm is brewing, and the gallant little “Triton,” with a goodly cargo, will meet with accident—no doubt of that.

While our friend is thinking of these things, and trembling for his “Triton,” bound to the bottom as sure as ever scuttled ship was doomed, he feels a tingling in his ear. This satisfies him that some are talking about him. But what can they be saying? Are they telling up his good deeds, numbering his excellent qualities, writing up his virtues—like tombstone grief; or are they pointing out his weaknesses, condemning his vices, ridiculing his absurdities, and writing him down an ass? Which ear is it tingles? The right: then are his excellencies exalted. A tingling in the right ear is always a good omen. But, unfortunately, it is in the left—there is no mistake about it; the most subtle casuist cannot make left right, and right left. The talker talks with no respect of persons; he condemns our friend as a scoundrel, whispers all the idle gossip of the town, tells all the prattle—such prattle as people love to hear, though it be foul and dirty, and black as ink. All the stories that our friend would have kept secret are blazing forth, and he knows very well that the circle of listeners,

“Whatever they hear are sure to spread  
East and west and north and south,  
Like the ball which, according to Captain Z.,  
Went in at his ear and came out at his mouth.”

When the left ear tingles, people talk ill of us; if it be so, some people's left ears must never leave off tingling. But what is to be done? Charm for charm. Our friend must bite his little finger; the evil speaker's tongue will be in the same predicament. Don't spare the little finger.

Our friend has been relating a remarkable story, the visitors have been all listening anxiously. “Is it true, is he quite satisfied of its authenticity?” Quite. Up stands our friend, when his chair falls backward, and falls on the ground with a crash. There is an audible titter. Our friend colours “ruddier than the cherry.” What does it mean? The falling of a chair is a sure sign that the person who sat in it has been guilty of untruth. Our friend is about to present a very choice knife to a fair acquaintance, but he knows very well that it may sever their friendship for ever. To give cold steel, scissors or knives, separates friendship between even the dearest friends. Therefore, some money, no matter how small a piece, must be paid—duly paid—and the affair be regarded as a purchase. Salt, also, must not be given; it must be bought, else unthought-of calamity is sure to follow. Our friend has plucked a water lily, that spread its broad leaves and white and yellow cups upon the water. No harm is done by this; but he has unfortunately slipped and fallen while he had it in his hand. What will be the result? Perhaps a bruise or two; nothing of the sort—but he will now be subject to fits. Moreover, he happens to have cut his finger rather deeply, and the manner which he takes to cure the wound is as simple as it is remarkable. He anoints the knife with oil, puts it into a drawer, and allows it to remain there for some days. Sympathetically the cut is cured. Our friend, likewise, entertains the notion that if he goes under a ladder he stands the chance of being hanged; that the consequence of such an imprudent act will in all probability be a long cord and a short shrift. Then, being once or twice detected talking to himself—like a modern Prince of Denmark—he is confirmed in the idea, for to soliloquise is the sure precursor of a violent death. And as our friend occasionally feels a cold shivering sensation in his back,

he begins to understand that his time is near, and that somebody is walking over his grave.

Such are a few of the odd fancies which our Saxon forefathers left us as an heir-loom. Signs and omens, such as ancient Romans might have gathered from the flight of birds, and ancient Britons from the writhings of a sacrificial victim, our Saxon ancestors detected in every trifling circumstance of daily life. Such fancies are still

retained in Holland and in Germany, and here, in England, are not forgotten. It seems strange, indeed, that at any time such

"Trifles light as air"

should have affected the mind of man, but that they have done so is beyond all dispute, and such folk lore forms an extensive chapter in the delusions of the olden time.

## EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES.

MUCH controversy has taken place among men of science as to the physical character of the ancient Egyptians. It may be thought that of a people so ancient abundant testimony would be found in the works of the Greek travellers and historians, but the difficulty has been created by the conflicting statements of those writers, rather than by their silence on the subject. Volney maintains that they were negroes, and founds his opinion on passages in the works of Herodotus, Æschylus, and Lucian. Ammianus Marcellinus says they were, for the most part, of a brownish colour; and in an old Egyptian document in the Berlin Museum, in which the contracting parties are described by their external appearance, one is called black or dark brown (the word may be rendered either way), and the other yellow or honey-coloured. Dr. Prichard infers from these accounts, that the ancient Egyptians were a dark-coloured people, and that, at the same time, great varieties of colour existed among them, as is the case with the modern Hindoos and Abyssinians.

Denon gives the following description, founded upon a personal examination of Egyptian statues, busts, and bas-reliefs: "Full, but delicate and voluptuous forms; countenances sedate and placid; round and soft features; with eyes long, almond-shaped, half-shut, and languishing, and turned up at the outer angles, as if habitually fatigued by the light and heat of the sun; cheeks round; thick lips, full and prominent; mouths large, but cheerful and smiling; complexions dark, ruddy, and coppery; and the whole aspect displaying, as one of the most graphic delineators among modern travellers has observed, the genuine African character, of which the negro is the exaggerated and extreme representation."

The figures which illustrate this article afford some specimens of the characters exhibited by Egyptian sculptures. The originals are in the Egyptian Gallery in the Louvre. Fig. 1 represents two unknown personages, probably husband and wife, as may be indicated by the figure of a child between them. There is nothing to indicate that these figures represent deities, royal personages, or indeed any persons of distinction; probably the man held some civil employment under the Pharaohs.

Fig. 2 is a statue in black granite, without a head, of which it has been deprived by accident. It was found on the site of the ancient Sais, and is considered a fine specimen of ancient Egyptian art. The attitude and the execution are superior to the majority of Egyptian statues; and we may here remark that the sculptors of ancient Egypt represented upright figures less often than those which are seated. There is an inscription on this statue, from which we learn that it represents Horus, the son of Psammeticus, and a military chief.

The ancient Egyptian artists sometimes represented men kneeling before a kind of altar on which their deities were represented in relief. We give two examples of this kind of sculpture. Fig. 3 is a statuette in stone, of heavy workmanship, representing a high functionary, called in the inscription, "Basiliscus Grannatus, chief of the cavalry of the lord of two worlds, and guardian of the royal legs," kneeling before an altar, in a niche of which is a figure in relief of the god Osiris. Fig. 4 is a kneeling figure in black granite, supporting before him a sort of bench, on which three divinities are seated. The inscription on the upright slab at the back of the kneeling figure intimates that it is that of Ensanor, the son of Auwrer, who, among other titles, is called, "Chief of the gates of the meridional country."

Fig. 5 represents an individual called in the hieroglyphic inscription, Sepa, a prophet and priest of the white bull. The prophets were not in the first rank of the sacerdotal class, but took rank after the arch-prophets and the grand-priests attached to the worship of deified kings. This statue, which is regarded as one of

the most precious *morceaux* of the Louvre collection, is in calcareous stone, and appears to have been executed in the earliest period of Egyptian art. The position is simple, and the style of execution rude. The head is round, the shoulders rather high; the body presents an appearance of strength; the articulation of the knees is robust. The somewhat remarkable head-dress is painted black, and a green band is drawn under the eyes.

Fig. 6 is a representation of a bas-relief in calcareous stone from the tomb of Seti I., founder of the nineteenth dynasty, and a famous warrior, who succeeded to the throne towards the end of the sixth century before the Christian era. The figures are those of Seti and the goddess Hathor, supposed by Champollion to have been the Egyptian Venus, but more probably another name for Isis. Though both figures are in profile, the eyes, as was usual with the ancient artists, are represented full. The king has a youthful appearance; he wears a kind of scarf, the fringe of which is ornamented with two serpents, and sandals terminating in a point. His head-dress is adorned in front with a serpent, and he wears bracelets on his wrists, and a collar of four rows about his neck. His right hand holds the left hand of the goddess, and his left receives the collar which she holds out to him. The head-dress of the goddess is of great richness, and is surmounted by a solar disc between two cow's horns, from which a serpent hangs. She wears a collar of similar form to the king's. Her arms are bare, and adorned with bracelets and armlets; her feet are also bare, and ornamented with anklets. Her robe fits very closely to her form, and is curiously ornamented with lozenges and inscribed characters in alternate rows; the latter may be thus translated:—"Establisher of justice! we accord to thee many years, and power like that of the sun. Offspring of the sun! friend of the gods! Seti, the friend of Phthas! live for ever! Lord of two worlds, establisher of justice, we give thee many years and thousands of panegyrics. Beloved offspring of the sun! lord of diadems! Seti, the friend of Phthas, eternal as the sun! lord of two worlds, beloved by Hathor, inhabit always the land of peace and truth."

Phthas means one by whom events are decreed, and was used by the ancient Egyptians to designate the power or principle by which the universe was originated and presided over. Sometimes it was called Cneph, denoting a good genius; and it was represented symbolically by the figure of a serpent with its tail in its mouth—an emblem of eternity.

Figure 7 is a fragment of a bas-relief in calcareous stone, representing a funeral scene. The mother of the deceased lifts her hand to her head, with grief expressed in her countenance, perhaps to cover her hair with dust, according to ancient usage. A priest chants the funeral hymn, and behind him three persons utter exclamations of grief, or repeat the chorus of the hymn. In another compartment aquatic birds and plants are represented, and Charon's boat conveys the defunct across the sable waters of the lake of death. In a representation of a funeral on a tomb from the ruins of Thebes, the figures of the deceased and his sister are seated under a canopy, before a table covered with offerings; a priest pronounces their eulogy, and proclaims their right to be admitted into the realms of the blessed.

If we may form an idea of the complexion of the ancient Egyptians from the paintings found in their temples and tombs, the colouring of their statues and bas-reliefs, and of the sycamore cases in which their mummies are found enclosed, we must come to the conclusion that they were of a reddish-brown colour, like the existing Foulah and Kafir tribes. The male figures are invariably painted with this colour, and the female figures sometimes of a lighter shade of the same colour, and sometimes yellow or yellowish-